

A Brief Overview of Ephesians

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The mystery hidden from the beginning

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul used the Greek word *mysterion* six times (Eph 1:9, 3:3,4,9, 5:32, 6:19) to indicate a message that had been hidden but then later made known: “**Having made known unto us the mystery**” (Eph 1:9); “**the mystery of Christ**) Which in other ages **was not made known**” (Eph 3:4-5); “**the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world **hath been hid in God**” (Eph 3:9); “that I may open my mouth boldly, **to make known the mystery of the gospel**” (Eph 6:19). It was the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ that God hid within the historical narrative of the Scriptures, “the mystery of Christ” (Eph 3:4), “the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19). This mystery extends back to the very beginning of history within the creation narrative, “And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of **the mystery [mysterion 3466]**, which from **the beginning of the world** hath been hid in God, **who created all things** by Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:9), “**For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.** This is a great **mystery [mysterion 3466]**: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Eph 5:31-32).

Paul’s purpose for writing this letter was so that the Christians at Ephesus and all Christians later following could come to understand this hidden message: “The eyes of **your understanding [dianoia 1271]** being enlightened” (Eph 1:18), “Whereby, when ye read, **ye may understand [noeo 3539]** my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**” (Eph 3:4), “Having the **understanding [dianoia 1271]** darkened” (Eph 4:18). Since the first of the two great commandments Jesus gave is “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind [dianoia 1271]**” (Mat 22:37), then it’s imperative that we understand this hidden message to fully obey this commandment. We cannot be loving God with all of our mind and understanding if we are neglecting to understand this mystery.

After his wife had been created by being taken out of himself, Adam spoke this statement, “**And Adam said,** This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**” (Gen 2:23-24). Paul quoted Adam’s words concerning his relationship with his wife and revealed that it contained a hidden message concerning Christ and the church, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery:** but I speak **concerning Christ and the church.**” (Eph 5:31-32).

In his other letters, Paul equated Adam as being a type or figure of Christ, “**Adam’s** transgression, who is **the figure of him that was to come**” (Rom 5:14), “For as **in Adam** all die, even so **in Christ** shall all be made alive. ... And so it is written, **The first man Adam** was made a living soul; **the last Adam** *was made* a quickening spirit.” (1Co 15:22, 45). That he was “the figure of him that was to come” indicates that the coming of Christ into this world to save us from our sins and get the victory over death had been foretold but hidden in a mystery within the creation narrative of Adam and his wife. When Adam concluded “**Therefore** shall a man leave his father and his mother,” Paul emphasized the cause or the reason, “**For this cause** shall a man leave his father and his mother.” In other words, the reason a man leaves his home and is joined to his wife is so that his wife will share in his flesh and bones, “This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). Likewise, the reason Christ left his home in heaven and came to us was so that we would share in the resurrection of His flesh and bones, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for

a spirit hath not **flesh and bones**, as ye see me have" (Luk 24:39), "For we are members of his body, **of his flesh, and of his bones**" (Eph 5:30).

Establishing and acknowledging that the gospel message of Christ hidden in the beginning narratives of Scripture was Paul's purpose for writing this letter, is essential to properly understanding what he wrote. Many short statements, particularly in the first chapter alone, make the most sense when understood within his intended contextual framework: "in heavenly *places*" (Eph 1:3), "chosen us" (Eph 1:4), "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4), "predestinated us" (Eph 1:5), "the spirit of wisdom" (Eph 1:17), "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph 1:18), "the hope of his calling" (Eph 1:18), "every name that is named" (Eph 1:21), "put all things under his feet" (Eph 1:22), "the fullness of him" (Eph 1:23).

Calvinists, on the other hand, don't employ this proper context that the author himself prescribed but rather force an alien meaning into such statements as "chosen us" and "predestinated us" based upon their own theological and soteriological system. They persuade people to understand these statements within the packaging of an artificial, man-made context. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they're employing this very letter meant to help us understand the Scriptures, to contrarily add even more confusion and misunderstanding! Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ sent to teach us the truth so that we would mature in our understanding, "And he gave some, apostles ... **That we henceforth be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every **wind of doctrine**, by the **sleight of men, and cunning craftiness**, whereby they lie in wait **to deceive**" (Eph 4:11, 14). He wrote this to mature us out of deception, not so that we would be further deceived.

In heavenly

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly [epouranios 2032] places** in Christ" (Eph 1:3). Here at the beginning of Ephesians, as well as four other places (Eph 1:20, 2:6, 3:10, 6:12), Paul used the Greek adjective *epouranios* for *heavenly* but did not supply a noun for it to modify. The translators, evidently considering that he was talking about heaven as a place, inserted *places* to supply the missing noun. But Paul left us with no doubt as to what he was talking about when he stated toward the end of his letter, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness of this world**, against spiritual wickedness in **high [epouranios 2032] places**" (Eph 6:12). He was alluding to the mystery contained within the creation of the heavenly bodies:

And God said, Let there be **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; **the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night:** *he made* the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, **And to rule over the day and over the night**, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good. (Genesis 1:14-18)

Hidden within the creation of the heavenly bodies was the message about the Lordship of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father, "the greater light to rule the day," "set *him* **at his own right hand** in the **heavenly [epouranios 2032] places**" (Eph 1:20), and the rule of principalities and powers, "the lesser light to rule the

night,” **“the rulers of the darkness** of this world, against spiritual wickedness in **high [epouranios 2032] places”** (Eph 6:12).

On the first day of creation, before man had even been made, God showed that there would be two distinct classifications of people, “And God said, **Let there be light:** and there was light. And God saw the light, that *it was good*: and God **divided the light from the darkness.** And God **called the light Day,** and the **darkness he called Night.**” (Gen 1:3-5). Then on the fourth day He showed that these two groups of people would be under the rule of a master, “And God made two great lights; the greater light to **rule the day,** and the lesser light to **rule the night**” (Gen 1:16).

Since it was Jesus Christ who created all things, **“All things were made by him;** and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jhn 1:3), therefore it was He who spoke “Let there be light” in the beginning. But John goes on to indicate that Him speaking light into darkness in the beginning was figurative and prophetic of His ministry on earth, **“And the light shineth in darkness;** and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jhn 1:5). In other words, the creation contains this hidden message in a mystery that the world would be in spiritual darkness but the Word would become flesh and preach the light of the gospel as if once again speaking “Let there be light.”

But if **our gospel** be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom **the god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,** who is the image of God, should shine unto them. **For we preach** not ourselves, but **Christ Jesus the Lord;** and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. **For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,** to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

Paul revealed this same truth to the Corinthians that God speaking light into darkness in the beginning is indeed figurative and prophetic of the gospel of Jesus Christ as if light was shining into darkened hearts. Therefore, when He **“called the light Day,** and the **darkness he called Night”** then set rulers over them “the greater light to **rule the day,** and the lesser light to **rule the night,”** the message is the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the *day* and the “god of this world” over the *night*.

Recognizing the truth of this mystery is crucial for the proper context in which Paul’s letter to the Ephesians can be understood. Of the five places the phrase “in heavenly [epouranios 2032]” appears, the first three speak of the Greater Light at the right hand of the Father: “all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ” (Eph 1:3), “set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*” (Eph 1:20), “made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6). The other two times are about the lesser light ruling over the darkness: “the principalities and powers in heavenly *places*” (Eph 3:10), “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*” (Eph 6:12).

That Christ is the Greater Light means that He is stronger and more powerful than all principality and power, “set *him* at his own right hand **in the heavenly [epouranios 2032] places, Far above all principality, and power,** and might, and dominion” (Eph 1:20-21). Therefore, when Paul began his letter with “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed us** with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly [epouranios 2032] places in Christ**” (Eph 1:3), he was beginning to lay the groundwork for later teaching the whole armor of God:

Finally, my brethren, **be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God**, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but **against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness** of this world, against spiritual wickedness in **high [epouranios 2032] places**. (Ephesians 6:10-12)

We are no match for the devil and evil spirits. Unless we are serving Jesus Christ as our Lord, we are under the power of evil spirits and we are serving sin. The only way to be free from the power of sin is by obeying from our hearts the doctrine of Jesus Christ, “But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have **obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine** which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**” (Rom 6:17-18). When we become servants or slaves of Jesus Christ, we belong to Him and are protected by Him in His strength over the enemy. We have His strength and authority in our lives as though we are seated together with Him at the right hand of the Father, “And hath raised *us* up together, and **made *us* sit together in heavenly [epouranios 2032] places in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 2:6). This is what is meant by the armor of God.

The whole armor of God

The armor of God taught at the end of Ephesians is essentially a summary of what Paul had been teaching throughout his letter beginning with “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed *us*** with all spiritual blessings in **heavenly [epouranios 2032] places in Christ**” (Eph 1:3). Of course armor is simply a concrete example being used metaphorically to help us understand how things are spiritually. By serving Jesus Christ as Lord and trusting Him, He defends us from the devil as if we are a soldier wearing His armor.

One of the main tactics of the devil is deceiving us to thinking that people are the problem, “that ye may be able to stand against **the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood**” (Eph 6:11-12). He gets us fighting, envying, blaming, and complaining about each other. But the real problem is that people are serving “the rulers of the darkness of this world” because they live under their deceptions. If someone can deceive someone else into doing what they don’t want to do, or into not doing what they want to do, then they have power over them. Paul spoke of his life before Christ as a slave to sin, “I am carnal, **sold under sin**. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Rom 7:14-15). The devil’s power over people is deception and the only solution is for them to learn the truth and turn from sin to serve Jesus Christ as Lord.

The first piece of armor is “having your loins girt about with truth” (Eph 6:14). Notice that he didn’t say “having your loins girt about with *assumptions*.” It’s truth that protects us from the enemy, not what we assume to be the truth but really is not. If our loins are girt about with false assumptions then we have a chink in the armor—we are vulnerable to the enemy even though we think we are safe. Paul had already taught earlier, “But ye have not so **learned Christ**; If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**” (Eph 4:20-21). The belt of truth is living according to the truth that Christ taught particularly in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7.

The next piece of armor is “and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph 6:14). Again, Paul had taught earlier that this righteousness consists of putting off the old man and putting on the new: “That ye **put off**

concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be **renewed in the spirit of your mind**; And that ye **put on the new man**, which **after God is created in righteousness** and true holiness" (Eph 4:22-24). The breastplate of protection is living righteously in conformity to the image of God in which we were created.

We must be "renewed in the spirit of your mind." Our vain and darkened minds "in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened" (Eph 4:17-18), need to be enlightened with the truth that Jesus taught "have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21). Therefore, we are to turn away from the old person we used to be and begin living righteously as a new person conformed to the image of Christ as we were originally created. We are to put off the fig leaves of our own righteousness "and they knew that they *were* naked; and they **sewed fig leaves together**, and made themselves aprons" (Gen 3:7), and put on the skins of the Lamb that God sacrificed for us, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make **coats of skins, and clothed them**" (Gen 3:21).

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15). Our feet are what take us from one place to another. Since people are serving sin and being ruled by evil spirits, we must bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. Preaching "the gospel of peace" means that they hear the message of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, "And that he might **reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross**, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and **preached peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him **we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**" (Eph 2:16-18). People are serving sin rather than the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, they need to hear about Him.

"Above all, taking the shield of **faith [pistis 4102]**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph 6:16). The Greek *pistis* does not mean *faith* but *faithfulness*—it's not a shield of belief but a shield of faithfulness and loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are faithfully serving Him then we can trust Him to defend us against the fiery darts of people's tongues, "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members" (Jam 3:6). Ultimately our struggle is not against the fiery arrows launched from flesh and blood: slander, gossip, false accusations, complaining, whispering, mocking, arguing, and belittling.

Christ is our example of faithfulness and trust, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but **committed himself to him that judgeth righteously**" (1Pe 2:23). He didn't try to defend Himself of false accusations but committed His case to the Father to justify and vindicate Him:

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. *He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me?* let us stand together: who *is* mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who *is* he *that* shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. (Isaiah 50:6-9)

Behold, **I have created the smith** that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and **I have created the waster to destroy**. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and **every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn**. This *is* the heritage of **the servants of the LORD**, and **their righteousness *is* of me**, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:16-17)

We shouldn't fear the blacksmith that creates weapons to be used against us or the waster that wields the weapons against us, but we should fear God who created both the blacksmith and the waster! Taking the shield of faithfulness means that we serve the Lord and allow Him to defend us against the tongues that rise against us. We seek His righteousness and vindication.

"And take the helmet of salvation" (Eph 6:17). The helmet is our hope of salvation, "for an helmet, **the hope of salvation**" (1Th 5:8). This salvation is deliverance from death in resurrection from the grave at Christ's return, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as **others which have no hope.**" (1Th 4:13). We have been saved from our sins and have forgiveness and reconciliation with God right now, but we have not yet been saved from death. We are still hoping for that salvation.

God pronounced the curse upon the creation including death "**till thou return unto the ground**; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and **unto dust shalt thou return**" (Gen 3:19). He did this in hope of saving us from death, "**For the creature was made subject to vanity**, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath **subjected the same in hope ... For we are saved by hope**: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*." (Rom 8:20, 24-25).

The final piece of armor is "the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word [rhema 4487] of God: Praying always with all prayer** and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication **for all saints**" (Eph 6:17-18). It has been rightly observed that this is the one piece of armor we can use offensively against our enemy. But this sword has two edges—the word of God and prayer.

The Greek here for *word* is *rhema* which is a spoken word out of the mouth. Christ Himself demonstrated this weapon against the enemy during His temptation, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every **word [rhema 4487]** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat 4:4). When we are being tempted, we must speak God's words and not our own because His words carry authority. When tempting thoughts come to our minds or when we are placed into tempting situations it's not enough to just try to avoid the thoughts and temptations. We must understand God's message through the Scriptures so that we can speak in His authority against the temptations.

The other edge of this sword is praying always for our fellow brothers and sisters as Paul had already demonstrated in the two prayers he voiced for them earlier in this letter (Eph 1:16-23, 3:14-21). We all need prayer because we are all under attack from evil spirits every day. Once again, we are deceived if we think that people are the real problem, "the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood." When people mistreat us, they need our prayers. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:21).

These pieces that comprise the whole armor of God are the spiritual blessings "in heavenly" that we have been blessed with, "blessed us with **all spiritual blessings in heavenly places** in Christ" (Eph 1:3). Because Christ was set at the right hand of God, "set *him* at his **own right hand in the heavenly places**" (Eph 1:20), when we wear this armor we have the victory over the enemy as though we are seated with Christ, "**made us sit together in heavenly places** in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6). His armor enables us to stand "against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness** of this world, against spiritual wickedness **in high places**" (Eph 6:12).

When writing to the Romans, Paul called this armor the armor of light, “put on the armour of light ... But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:12, 14). This armor of light is more specifically the armor of the Greater Light, “**the greater light** to rule the day, and **the lesser light** to rule the night” (Gen 1:16). John saw “a woman clothed with the sun, and **the moon under her feet**” (Rev 12:1). She is the church clothed with Christ and seated with Him, “set *him* at his own right hand **in the heavenly places** ... And hath put **all things under his feet**, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to **the church**” (Eph 1:20, 22).

In Christ Jesus

The phrase “in Christ Jesus,” in its various forms such as “in Christ,” “in him,” and “in whom” appears about a dozen times in the first two chapters of Ephesians: “to the faithful **in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 1:1), “in heavenly *places* **in Christ**” (Eph 1:3), “made us accepted **in the beloved**” (Eph 1:6), “gather together in one all things **in Christ** ... *even in him*” (Eph 1:10), “**In whom** also we have obtained an inheritance” (Eph 1:11), “**In whom** ye also *trusted*” (Eph 1:13), “in heavenly *places* **in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 2:6), “created **in Christ Jesus** unto good works” (Eph 2:10), “But now **in Christ Jesus**” (Eph 2:13), “for to make **in himself** of twain one new man” (Eph 2:15), “**In whom** all the building fitly framed together” (Eph 2:21), “**In whom** ye also are builded together” (Eph 2:22).

Within the context of these “in Christ” statements the church is said to be His body, “gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to **the church, Which is his body**” (Eph 1:22-23). And Paul will later equate the church with what Adam said after his wife had been taken out of him, “**For we are members of his body** ... For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh ... **Christ and the church**” (Eph 5:30-32). The church, therefore, is “in Christ” as it was with Adam’s wife:

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had **taken from man**, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because **she was taken out of Man**. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall **cleave unto his wife**: and they shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:21-24)

The woman was “in Adam” so to speak and created by being taken out of him. She was created “in him” and so it is with the church and Christ, “For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10). No doubt this is what Paul had in mind with “created in Christ Jesus” because he later quoted from the very passage of the woman being created in Adam, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph 5:31).

The “good works” are the husband and wife roles that God had before ordained from the very beginning, “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; **in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children**; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and **he shall rule over thee ... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread**, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:16-19). Paul will go on to emphasize these roles later in his letter, “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, **working with his hands the thing which is good**, that he

may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph 4:28), "**Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands**, as unto the Lord" (Eph 5:22).

He will write the same in his first letter to Timothy, "**For Adam was first formed, then Eve**. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be **saved in childbearing**, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1Ti 2:13-15), "But if any **provide not for his own**, and specially for those of his own house, **he hath denied the faith**, and is worse than an infidel" (1Ti 5:8). This "saved in childbearing" statement is not that she will be saved from a bad stigma as many teach. Rather, he was saying that men and women cannot rebel against these God-ordained roles and still be saved. It certainly doesn't mean that a woman must give birth to a child to be saved but simply that we must embrace and walk in the roles of these "good works" without affirming or living contrary lifestyles.

All things under His feet

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he them**. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26-28)

David coined the expression "under his feet" when writing about this dominion God created man to have, "**Thou madest him to have dominion** over the works of thy hands; **thou hast put all *things* under his feet**: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas." (Psa 8:6-8). This same expression used of Adam's dominion over the animals is quoted three times in the New Testament concerning the dominion of Jesus Christ:

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. **For he hath put all things under his feet**. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. (1 Corinthians 15:25-27)

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and **every name that is named**, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: **And hath put all *things* under his feet**, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to **the church**, Which is his body, **the fulness of him** that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:20-23)

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: **Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet**. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. (Hebrews 2:7-8)

Adam naming all of the animals was not so that we would marvel about what a great memory he must have had! It foretells of Christ's dominion at the right hand of God over "every name that is named ... And hath put

all *things* under his feet” (Eph 1:21-22). That Adam named all of the animals would mean, of course, that he also named the serpent. Thus Christ has dominion over the devil and “all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.” But this dominion given to the man would be not just for him but also for his wife, “let them have dominion ... male and female created he them.”

And the LORD God said, ***It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*** And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and ***whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*** (Genesis 2:18-19)

Before giving Adam this dominion over every name that he would name, God had already stated His intent of creating a helper for him, “***It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.***” This helper would later be taken out of him which can only mean that she was already “in him” when he was given this dominion. This is how Paul wanted us to understand our position “in Christ” seated at God’s right hand in heavenly, “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and ***set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places***” (Eph 1:20), “And hath raised *us* up together, and ***made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus***” (Eph 2:6).

Everything God made by the end of the sixth day was very good, “And God saw ***every thing that he had made***, and, behold, ***it was very good***” (Gen 1:31). But earlier on the sixth day He stated that it would not be good for the man to be alone in his dominion, “*It is not good that the man should be alone.*” The church is Christ’s wife which is His body, “And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to ***the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him*** that filleth all in all” (Eph 1:22-23). She complements Him as a helper. Therefore, she is “the fullness of him” in the sense that being alone in His dominion without her would not be good.

God’s chosen people

After the Exodus of His people from Egypt, God began raining bread down from heaven and introduced to them the Sabbath day of rest: “To morrow ***is the rest of the holy sabbath*** unto the LORD ... ***Six days ye shall gather it;*** but on the seventh day, ***which is the sabbath***, in it there shall be none. ... See, for that ***the LORD hath given you the sabbath***, therefore he giveth you on ***the sixth day*** the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on ***the seventh day***” (Exo 16:23, 26, 29). God would later give them the priestly service of rotating the showbread also patterned after the Sabbath day:

And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table ***before the LORD.*** And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on ***the bread for a memorial, even*** an offering made by fire unto the LORD. ***Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken*** from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be ***Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place:*** for it *is* most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute. (Leviticus 24:5-9)

God also told His people when giving the Ten Commandments that this Sabbath day of rest following six days of work was based upon the creation week:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: **For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.** (Exodus 20:8-11)

Now, how are we to understand this? Isn't it obvious that God had already purposed this from the very beginning? Are we to think that He created everything in six days and rested the seventh with no particular reason in mind then later came up with the idea of using this as a pattern for His people to follow? Actually, this six-day work week with a seventh day of rest model was intended for His people from the very first day of creation. Therefore, within the very creation, God showed that He intended to later choose a people unto Himself.

What about all the times Jesus healed people on the Sabbath day? Couldn't the man with the withered hand wait just one more day? Jesus did this seemingly with the very intent of infuriating the corrupt religious leaders. He told them, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mar 2:27). God made the Sabbath for man, not for Himself—He can do anything He wants on any day! Therefore, it was as if these men were saying, "No God! You shouldn't heal people on the Sabbath!" In fact, the ruler of the synagogue said exactly that, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and **not on the sabbath day.**" (Luk 13:14). That Jesus was doing the works that only God can do on the day that only God can work proved the He is from God.

Are we to consider that it was Jesus' own idea to heal people on the Sabbath? Rather, we should conclude that the very creation week event defined what would transpire about 4,000 later in the Son of God's ministry on the earth. God created the Sabbath with the very intent of the conflicts that would be caused by His Son's healing ministry. The Sabbath was purposed from the beginning to be one of the very catalysts in the Son of God being put to death to save us from our sins.

Since "The sabbath was made for man" (Mar 2:27), yet God Himself "rested on the seventh day from all his work" (Gen 2:2), then the message from the beginning was that God would become a Man, do the works of God as a Man, then forever rest from all of His work. The writer of Hebrews concluded this as well, "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, **And God did rest the seventh day** from all his works ... There remaineth therefore **a rest to the people of God.** For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from **his own works, as God did from his.**" (Heb 4:4, 9-10). Therefore, the chosen people of God were indeed intended from the very beginning of creation by God's purpose of sending His Son to them, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat 15:24), "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God" (Rom 15:8).

What about the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost? "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths shall be complete:** Even unto the morrow **after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days;** and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD" (Lev 23:15-16). This Feast was based upon the Sabbath week which was based upon the

creation week. Therefore, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost was purposed from the very creation. This event with God's chosen people—the 120 Jews in the upper room along with an additional 3,000 that came to Christ that day—was purposed from the beginning.

Not only this, the first and fourth days of creation anticipated that humanity would be grouped under two different rulers, "God divided the light from the darkness. And God **called the light Day**, and the **darkness he called Night**." (Gen 1:3-5), "And God made two great lights; the greater light to **rule the day**, and the lesser light to **rule the night**" (Gen 1:16). "Ye are all the **children of light**, and the **children of the day**: we are not **of the night**, nor **of darkness**" (1Th 5:5). The "children of light" are God's own people divided or separated from the rest of the world.

Finally, what about clean and unclean animals? "The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2Pe 2:22). Didn't God create dogs to practice this deplorable behavior instinctively, and pigs with an inherent satisfaction for being unclean? Did He create them this way for no particular reason then realize later that it could be used for a spiritual application? Animals were created before humans and the unclean animals are figurative of Gentiles. Therefore, God's chosen people and all other people are seen in a mystery within the creation of the animals.

All of this substantiates Paul's proposition at the start of his letter, "According as he hath **chosen us in him before the foundation [katabole 2602] of the world**" (Eph 1:4). The Greek *katabole* here doesn't carry the meaning of *founding* or *creating* but instead of "casting down" what was already created. In fact, the writer of Hebrews used this same statement in reference to the sentence of death pronounced upon man in the curse, "For then must he often have suffered **since the foundation [katabole 2602] of the world**: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as **it is appointed unto men once to die**, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:26-27). Thus the *katabole* of the world is about the cursing of the ground in which it was appointed for man to return, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, **till thou return unto the ground**; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and **unto dust shalt thou return**" (Gen 3:19).

This word *katabole* also speaks of the serpent being cursed and cast down upon his belly, "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, **thou art cursed** above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; **upon thy belly shalt thou go**, and **dust shalt thou eat** all the days of thy life" (Gen 3:14). John used its verb form *kataballo* when writing about the serpent:

And the great dragon was **cast out, that old serpent**, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was **cast out into the earth**, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is **cast down [kataballo 2598]**, which accused them before our God day and night." (Revelation 12:9-10)

God *proorizo* or predetermined before the curse that He would choose a people to Himself that would be His children, "According as he hath **chosen us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and without blame** before him in love: Having **predestinated [proorizo 4309] us unto the adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph 1:5). "**Ye are the children of the LORD your God**: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and **the LORD hath chosen thee** to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.” (Deu 14:1-2).

Before cursing the creation, “For the creature was made subject to vanity” (Rom 8:20), He already foreknew and determined His people, “For whom he did **foreknow [proginosko 4267]**, he also did **predestinate [proorizo 4309]** to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29), “God hath not cast away **his people** which he **foreknew [proginosko 4267]**” (Rom 11:2). These people would be His adopted sons and daughters conformed to the image of His only begotten Son.

The church

Paul taught that the operation of a local church gathering can be understood somewhat like the functioning of the human body in that both are composed of many unique members with different duties yet all work together in unity toward the same end, “From whom **the whole body fitly joined together** and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in **the measure of every part**, maketh increase of **the body unto the edifying of itself in love**” (4:16), “**For as we have many members in one body**, and all members have not the same office: **So we, being many, are one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another” (Rom 12:4-5), “**For as the body is one, and hath many members**, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: **so also is Christ**” (1Co 12:12). But Paul didn’t just come up with this analogy himself—it’s an aspect of the mystery revealed to him that God had purposed in the creation of the human body.

Since Christ created all things, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jhn 1:3), and He created both male and female after His image, “And God said, **Let us make man in our image**, after our likeness ... So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he them**” (Gen 1:26-27), then He purposed from the beginning that the husband and wife relationship would be analogous of Himself and the church.

The woman is figurative of a local church. Her body is composed of many unique members that function corporately for the health of the whole but ultimately for the sake of her husband for whom she was created, “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (1Co 11:9). This mystery within the creation of the man and woman is the gospel message of Christ and His body the church. Therefore, the local church with Christ as its head was God’s plan from the very beginning.

God’s chosen people were shown within the mystery of the woman created out of the man, “According as he hath **chosen us in him** before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4). They are members of the woman’s body as it is with individual members of a human body. Ultimately they are Christ’s body as a woman is one flesh with her husband. Paul used the same Greek phrase *hagios kai amomos* for both God’s chosen people and for the church indicating that they are synonymous groups of people, “**chosen us in him** ... that we should be **holy [hagios 40] and without [kai 2532] blame [amomos 299]**” (Eph 1:4), “**a glorious church** ... that it should be **holy [hagios 40] and without [kai 2532] blemish [amomos 299]**” (Eph 5:27).

The New Covenant was made with Christ’s Jewish disciples, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; **this is my body**. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **For this is my blood of the new testament**,

which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat 26:26-28). Although the church began with God’s chosen people only, “who **first trusted** in Christ” (Eph 1:12), Samaritans and Gentiles were later included and allowed to partake of the same spiritual blessings within the same local gatherings, “In whom **ye also trusted**” (Eph 1:13).

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for **salvation is of the Jews**. (John 4:22)

And if some of the branches be broken off, and **thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them**, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, **thou bearest not the root, but the root thee**. (Romans 11:17-18)

And again he saith, **Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people**. (Romans 15:10)

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if **the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. (Romans 15:27)

That at that time ye were without Christ, **being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12)

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah**. (Hebrews 8:8)

The hope of His calling

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you **the spirit of wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of him: **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that ye may know what is **the hope of his calling [klesis 2821]**, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:17-18).

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired **to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. **And the eyes of them both were opened**, and they knew that **they were naked**; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. **And the LORD God called unto Adam**, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid, because I was naked**; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:6-10)

This “spirit of wisdom” of which Paul spoke is what the woman was deceived into thinking she would get by disobeying the commandment of God. But the true wisdom that was prophesied here in the fall of mankind is

the teaching of Jesus Christ, “Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, **and doeth them**, I will liken him unto **a wise man, which built his house upon a rock** ... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, **and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto **a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand**” (Mat 7:24, 26). “But ye have not so **learned Christ**; If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**” (Eph 4:20-21). Our spiritually blind eyes become enlightened by hearing and obeying the truth taught by Jesus Christ. The hope of His calling, our only hope of salvation from death, is to live as a wise person in obedience to Jesus Christ.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the **vocation [klesis 2821]** wherewith ye are **called**, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep **the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. *There is one body*, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope of your calling [klesis 2821]**; **One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God** and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)

The Greek *klesis* rendered as *vocation* here is the same word used in the statements “the hope of his **calling [klesis 2821]**” (Eph 1:18), “one hope of your **calling [klesis 2821]**” (Eph 4:4). Paul was referring to the calling of God to Adam after he sinned, “And the LORD God **called unto Adam**, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?” (Gen 3:9). The hope of His calling is that the Seed of the woman would come and bruise the serpent’s head. It’s the hope of redemption from the curse placed on the creation, “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath **subjected the same in hope**” (Rom 8:20).

In these seven “one” statements that begin with “one body,” Paul was not speaking of singularity as if saying there is only one body as opposed to two or three, but rather of unity which the context imposes, “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” He meant that both Jews and Gentiles should be in peace and unity with each other because they are all members of the same body of Christ, have the same indwelling Spirit, share the same hope of His calling, serve the same Lord, are saved by the same faithfulness, were baptized in the same name of Jesus, and are children of the same Father God. That Paul was speaking of peace and unity between Jews and Gentiles is evident from what he taught earlier:

For he is **our peace**, who hath made **both one**, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh **the enmity**, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself **of twain** one new man, **so making peace**; And that he might **reconcile both** unto God in one body by the cross, having slain **the enmity** thereby: And came and **preached peace** to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him **we both** have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:14-18)

As Paul taught the Colossians, “And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge **after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew**, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all” (Col 3:10-11). In other words, at the time of creation there were no Greeks or Jews, no distinction between Circumcision and uncircumcision, and no Barbarians, Scythians, bond or free. All people are created after the image of God. Therefore, the calling to Adam is “the hope of his calling” for all people through Jesus Christ.

The Chief Cornerstone

As stated earlier, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost is based upon the Sabbath week which in turn is based upon the creation week. Therefore, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost was purposed from the very creation. And what about the Tower of Babel? Did God not anticipate the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost when He confused the languages to begin with?

“For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people ... Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa 28:11, 16). Isaiah was prophesying about the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit would be poured out along with the gift of tongues—this event would be like the laying of the main stone in the foundation of the Temple. Zion is the name of Jerusalem under the reign of King David, “In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in **Jerusalem he reigned** thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah ... Nevertheless David took the strong hold of **Zion: the same is the city of David**” (2Sa 5:5, 7).

The optimal time and place for the resurrection of Jesus Christ to be either proved or disproved was at that time in Jerusalem with the empty tomb. That David’s tomb was still occupied, “Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and **his sepulchre is with us unto this day**” (Act 2:29), meant that David’s prophecy about resurrection before the body decayed “neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Act 2:27), could not have been about himself. Furthermore, this supernatural gift of immediate fluency in a foreign language upon the followers of Jesus was confirmation from God of their eyewitness testimony that He is alive. This event upon these Jewish followers of Jesus Christ, therefore, became the foundation of the faith upon which everything in the church would be based.

The gift of tongues poured out upon the Jews at the beginning of the church was the basis upon which the Jews concluded the salvation of the Gentiles, **“For they heard them speak with tongues,** and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, **which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”** (Act 10:46-47), “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, **as on us at the beginning** ... When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**” (Act 11:15, 18).

The Jewish people were those “he hath chosen” (1:4) as can be deducted by the creation week, Sabbath week, and Feast of Weeks. They were allowed to hear the gospel first before the Gentiles: **“Unto you first** God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” (Act 3:26), “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that **the word of God should first have been spoken to you:** but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, **we turn to the Gentiles.**” (Act 13:46), “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; **to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**” (Rom 1:16).

“That we should be to the praise of his glory, **who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted,** after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, **ye were sealed [sphragizo 4972] with that holy Spirit of promise**” (Eph 1:12-13). Gentiles “were sealed” means that they were approved or confirmed by God through this same sign gift as also being saved, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). It has nothing to do with locking salvation or the security of the believer. This is how the Greek *sphragizo* was used with Jesus Christ being approved by God as

the Messiah, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: **for him hath God the Father sealed [sphragizo 4972]**” (Jhn 6:27), “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; **Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs**, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know” (Act 2:22).

The Gentiles received “that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13), “That the blessing of Abraham **might come on the Gentiles** through Jesus Christ; that we might receive **the promise of the Spirit** through faith” (Gal 3:14), as the Jews received on the Day of Pentecost, “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father **the promise of the Holy Ghost**, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Act 2:33).

Jesus Christ was resurrected by the Holy Spirit because His Father promised resurrection to Him, “having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.” It’s because both Jews and Gentiles have the same Holy Spirit in their hearts that they share the same “hope of his calling,” the hope of resurrection promised to us by faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In summary

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is all about helping them understand the message God communicated through the Scriptures from the beginning but hid in a mystery. The message is the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. This gospel message had to be hidden for it to have been carried out and accomplished, “But we speak the wisdom of God in **a mystery, even the hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: **for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory**” (1Co 2:7-8). Now that Paul revealed the message God spoke since the beginning, there can be no legitimate arguments made about salvation coming some other way than through serving Jesus Christ as Lord.